

AUDACIOUS WOMEN FESTIVAL

AUDACIART WEEKLY

Lost in the Fire

17 April 2020



Image: Eyes of the Tiger ©Sara Cushley

An Audacious Women Publication



AudaciArt – Lost in the Fire

This week's theme, *Lost in the Fire* was suggested by a quote from Michelle K:

Some women are lost in the fire. Some women are built from it

Introduction

The Audacious Women Festival is a chance for women to break personal, political and institutional barriers, and to celebrate audacious women. The Audacious Women Collective would like to invite and support you to Do What You Always Wish You Dared and take your first steps on a journey to audacity.

AudaciArt provides a perfect opportunity to try something new. No pressure, no competition, no judgemental comments; just a weekly theme to get your creative juices flowing.

Physical Distance – Not Social

During these days of Covid we have all been asked to remain *physically* separate from each other. We at Audacious Women do not believe that this means *social* distancing is also necessary. Many of you will have started or been invited to neighbourhood WhatsApp groups, or to a virtual dinner party, or to continue with your regular dance sessions, book groups and movie nights, but to do so in one or other of the online forums. Some people are even reporting that they feel less lonely and isolated than usual. Nevertheless, this is a very difficult period for many people, especially those who are more vulnerable and unable to leave the house at all. Others are missing regular social contact and friendships.

While many of us are isolated at home and others - not only health workers but all those in key jobs - are putting their lives, literally, on the line every day, it is more than ever essential that we support and honour each other. So during this period of physical distancing Audacious Women is running a series of [online events](#) to help build women's community, and to keep in touch with each other and our audacious natures.

AudaciArt

AudaciArt is a weekly event: We publish a word or phrase suggested by a quote by, or about an audacious women. Women are invited to create and submit any type of work inspired by the theme. A selection of the submissions is published weekly. This is the 2nd such publication.

Many thanks to all our contributors and to the Audacious Women Collective Members and volunteers who helped to make this possible.



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Benn Eighe
Marie Morrison



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Burning Bush

Sally Freedman



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Inferno

Jenny Strom

Flames lick the wood carving pictures in the air
Eyes unseeing until her face appears, glowing, flickers.... gone
The c(r)ackle of the logs her wicked laugh
I sit immobile, wooden. Slowly feeding pieces of myself to the inferno

Burning Our Boats



Copyright © 2020 Jenny Strom



Flames
Anne Conrad



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Easel Fire

Sally Freedman

It was ages since I'd been in the studio. Every spider and cobweb told the story of neglect as I waded through dust, to retrieve my fallen easel. It was swathed in disrepair and as I rubbed it down with a turpsy cloth I should not have been shocked to find it riddled with holes, its hitherto trusty legs were flaking and soft, musty and dangerous, like exotic cheese. The creeping residents of the old easel were also a threat to any neighbouring timber. Reluctantly, I recognised that it had to go.

"Get it away from the house! You have to burn it otherwise those devils'll swallow the chairs from under you!"

His voice resounded through the decades to remind me. My grandfather had restored enough antiques to recognise the danger of woodworm and made sure we all knew about it. His ancient panic struck me - perhaps I was already too late. I scrutinised the shelves and cupboards in my dusty studio, looking for the telltale drillings. A slew of paint spatters had me fooled for a heartsinking moment but everything else, doors, floorboards and skirtings seemed to be worm free. My old easel, boon companion and uncomplaining supporter of my creative efforts for many years, was alone in requiring the last rites.

Once I'd removed the nuts, bolts and levers, I lugged the awkward, disembodied pieces to our saw horse in the yard. It felt sacrificial, like a ritual butchering, as the rusty saw hee-hawed its jagged way through the wood, exposing tawny pink perfection alongside those damnable destructive dots. Within half an hour there was a tumbled pile of nothing but firewood, sawdust and the smell of resin. I gathered some dry, knobby ash twig fingers for kindling, and criss-crossed the fire pit with them, ready to light. The first match fell and sputtered uselessly against the damp ground. The second lodged between a clutch of dry leaves and began to smoulder. Memories curled smokily upwards and pictures of the past gazed at me from the sour, earthy haze.

I hadn't painted for several years, blunted and dimmed by the shock of my partner's death. The prognosis had given us six months. My studio refuge had no longer provided any pleasure or solace.



Smoke curled into the air, wood transforming into blooming, ruby and white heat, burning my cheeks, reminding me of the snowdrops and geraniums we'd loved.

The fire raged, its tongues of crimson and orange raggedly wrapping and unwrapping their prey. I felt a surge of energy as I hacked at the last chunks of the old easel and fed them into the flames as they licked the limbs of my old easel, I remembered the nestling heat of that familiar body, close and stirring; tenderness arising from a word or gesture and the deep satisfaction of companionable silence. So many good years. I smiled at our occasional dramas which had once felt so devastating.

I watch the conflagration, hear its scorching roar - sudden in the wind, as it tears into its ferocious feast. The blazing banquet blows in every direction as I wander through glowing, complex caverns, lingering in coral niches and purple dreams. Its brilliant light burns into the future and I feel the flickering heat of hope.

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Eyes of the Tiger

Sara Cushley

I created this piece of digital art to show how tigers are endangered due to deforestation and fires.



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